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# The Federal Council *and the* Interchurch World Movement

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A Statement agreed upon by the  
Administrative Committee of the  
Federal Council of the Churches  
of Christ in America and the  
Executive Committee of the  
Interchurch World Movement  
of North America.

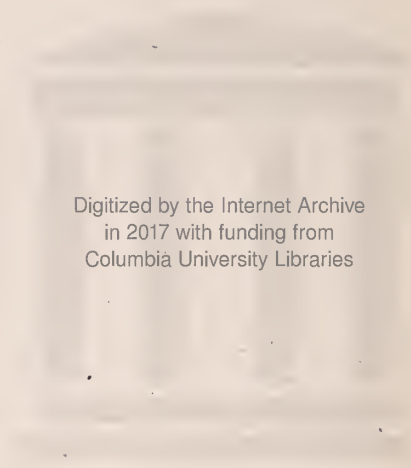
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INTERCHURCH WORLD MOVEMENT  
OF NORTH AMERICA

45 West 18th Street

New York City



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# The Federal Council *and* the Interchurch World Movement.

1. The chief danger to Christian unity at the present moment is the confusion which results from the lack of coordination between different and unrelated movements and agencies in its interest. Among these agencies the Federal Council is the one body constituted by the action of the denominations themselves, and holds a place of central responsibility. It is important, therefore, that its relation to the Interchurch World Movement should be clearly defined and its distinctive sphere of activities be safeguarded.

2. The Federal Council is a permanent organization, ecclesiastically constituted by its constituent bodies who have delegated to it specific, clearly defined purposes to promote the spirit of fellowship, service and co-operation among them. The purposes are set forth in its constitution and by-laws as follows:

“To express the fellowship and catholic unity of the Christian Church. To bring the Christian bodies of America into united service for Christ and the world. To encourage devotional fellowship and mutual counsel concerning the spiritual life and religious activities of the churches. To secure a larger combined influence for the churches of Christ in all matters affecting the moral and social conditions of the people, so as to promote the application of the law of Christ in every relation of human life. To assist in the organization of local branches of the Federal Council to promote its aims in their communities.”

The Federal Council's relationship with the denominations is securely established and its work has extended to many important

affairs of the churches. Its promotion of the past ten years has been the chief factor in making possible such a movement as the Interchurch World Movement and it should be an important factor in conserving the work of that movement. It furnishes the background of such movements.

The Interchurch World Movement is a co-operative movement, which is organized for the purpose of making a thorough survey of home and foreign missionary work, of educational, of Sunday school, and other phases of Christian activity with the purpose of securing resources of men and money for the accomplishment of the whole missionary task of the church. It is a volunteer or semi-volunteer movement, rather than an organization in the same sense as the Federal Council.

The Federal Council represents distinctively the denominations. Its main objective is federation.

The Interchurch World Movement, in so far as it may be regarded as representative, is representative of boards, movements and agencies which have to do with the particular phases of work undertaken by it. In the main its objective is missionary work, when the word "missionary" is used in its largest implications.

3. If the program of the Interchurch World Movement is carried out, as indicated by its general plans, it should strengthen the Federal Council, and the entire co-operative movement for which the Federal Council, in a peculiar way, stands.

The Federal Council can greatly help the Interchurch World Movement.

4. The constitution and organization of the two bodies are so different that each

should maintain its entire independence of the other, organically.

Some arrangement should be made, however, whereby all duplication and interference should be avoided and whereby each shall contribute to the strength of the other. Otherwise, both would be impaired, and the whole cause would suffer.

While the Interchurch World Movement is distinct from the ecclesiastical organizations and does not include them, its work should stimulate the ecclesiastical bodies, especially in the direction of federation.

It is recognized that the relation of the Interchurch World Movement to the ecclesiastical organizations of the churches must be determined by the church bodies themselves and that their advice will of course affect any relation of the Federal Council in representing the churches.

5. The Interchurch World Movement will necessarily have special relationships with certain commissions of the Federal Council, such as the Commission on Interchurch Federations and the Commission on the Church and Social Service and others. Such relationships as these should be carefully considered and determined upon.

There should be conference between such commissions and similar departments of the Interchurch World Movement to prepare a working plan on the basis of the principles set forth in this statement.

6. There are certain areas of work covered by the Federal Council and certain representative capacities and relations which should not be disturbed by the Interchurch World Movement and these should be considered and determined.

7. In its financial campaign the Interchurch World Movement should take into account its effect on the financial support of the Federal Council and arrangement should be made whereby the Federal Council shall be protected.

8. That any question of interpretation of the two documents presented by the Federal Council and the Interchurch World Movement be referred to the two secretaries, Dr. Macfarland and Dr. Taylor, and that sufficient copies be sent to each secretary for the staff members of each organization.

#### RELATION OF THE FEDERAL COUNCIL THROUGH ITS COMMISSION UPON INTERCHURCH FEDERATIONS TO THE INTERCHURCH WORLD MOVEMENT

In view of the fact that the Federal Council of Churches has been officially directed to give attention to the development of local and state interchurch councils or federations, and in view of the fact that the Interchurch World Movement must of necessity carry on practically all its field work through groupings of the same character, the relationship of the two at this particular point becomes one of fundamental importance. The following is the understanding of this relationship as developed in a conference in which Rev. Charles S. Macfarland, General Secretary of the Federal Council, S. Earl Taylor, General Secretary of the Interchurch World Movement and Fred B. Smith, Chairman of the Commission on Interchurch Federations of the Federal Council and also Chairman of the Convention Committee of the Interchurch World Movement, participated:

FIRST: Both the Federal Council and the Interchurch World Movement are seeking earnestly and sincerely the development of permanent interchurch councils

or federations in the states, local communities and cities of the whole country and in view of this common desire, an unusual intimacy is to be maintained upon this point.

**SECOND:** The Interchurch World Movement, whenever it approaches any given state, town or city, will seek to discover what cooperative movements already exist among the churches in these places and where they are of a worthy, comprehensive type, will in every case seek to cooperate with them. One of the following methods being pursued as the special issues may seem to warrant:

1. The Interchurch World Movement in that state, city or locality to be carried out by the existing federation.

2. The existing federation will appoint a special committee to carry out the plans and purposes of the Interchurch World Movement.

3. The existing federation to exercise its good office in calling together an adequate group of representatives of all the churches and all the Christian agencies for the purpose of organizing a special Interchurch World Movement Committee.

Note: These principles have been observed in the platform and pamphlet utterances of the Interchurch World Movement.

**THIRD:** The Federal Council of Churches, through its Commission on Interchurch Federations, and indeed, through all of its commissions, on its part, will seek to protect the large in-

terest of the Interchurch World Movement from being placed in the hands of inadequate federations and through them subjected to executive leadership which would be impossible upon the larger program. This in recognition of the existence of some so-called federations which have really never functioned and are in the hands of incompetent leaders.

FOURTH: Both the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America and the Interchurch World Movement, will seek during the process of the work to eliminate sentiment, or special anxiety concerning prerogatives, and to work unitedly for the best interest of the kingdom of God and the larger program of permanent cooperative effort in Protestant Christianity; each being ready to modify plans at any time when this larger ideal seems to demand such revision.